



Job Description

Job Title:

Principal Research Officer, Ecosystem Health & Social Dimensions

Grade: 9

Directorate: Conservation

Location: London Wetland Centre or home based (visits to other sites may be required), flexible working considered

Reporting to: Ecosystem Health & Social Dimensions Manager

Main function of post: To deliver a social science research programme which examines the effectiveness of two nature-based flood mitigation schemes in building flood resilience and generating social and health and wellbeing benefits for local communities.

Supervisory responsibilities: Senior Research Officers, Research Officers, Researchers, other project staff, students and volunteers.

Responsibilities of the post

1. To provide technical leadership of scientific work areas agreed under the WWT Programmes, including implementation of a social science research plan, supervision of data collection, data analysis, and scientific reporting, to a high standard. Areas of focus include evaluating the effectiveness of nature-based flood mitigation schemes in building flood resilience and generating social and health and wellbeing benefits for local communities.
2. To play a leadership role in ensuring that WWT scientific outputs have maximum impact, for the benefit of wetland conservation and WWT, by pro-actively communicating to:
 - Scientific audiences via peer-reviewed papers, presentations at scientific meetings and technical reports;
 - Policy audiences such as government institutions via policy meetings, events, technical reports and publications;
 - Community stakeholders via appropriate fora and communication channels;
 - WWT supporters and the wider public, including features and news items for WWT's Waterlife magazine, articles for the WWT website, public talks and presentations
 - Staff of other WWT departments needing technical advice, and
 - Other WWT staff, via the intranet, talks and presentations.

3. To support the successful development of the Conservation Evidence Department through pro-actively sharing ideas, skills and working practices; building collaborations with academia, NGO's and government agencies in the UK and overseas, and representing WWT on appropriate national/international research and conservation fora where this meets WWT objectives.
4. To actively maintain existing and develop new scientific skills, and stay abreast of relevant scientific developments.
5. To participate as a technical expert in project teams as requested, including supporting decision-making by the Project Manager and delivery of project communications.
6. To support the conservation and engagement work of WWT more widely, by responding in timely fashion to requests for input to casework, policy and advocacy, and engagement with members and supporters.
7. To provide leadership to all staff and volunteers working within a project team, enabling every team member's contribution to be maximised by ensuring that the appropriate levels of direction and support are provided through professional line management in line with WWT's people frameworks.
8. To work alongside volunteers encouraging, developing and supporting them in their work for WWT, ensuring that they have a positive volunteering experience.
9. To be responsible for working within the WWT health and safety policy and guidelines ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of yourself and others is an integral part of how you work.
10. To engage with the WWT Sustainability Statement being aware of negative environmental impacts and incorporating sustainable ways of working within your role.

In addition to the duties and responsibilities listed, the post holder is required to perform any other reasonable duties that may be assigned by the supervisor shown above, from time to time.

Date raised: 23 July 2025

Amended:

Person Specification

1. Qualifications

Essential:

- Degree or equivalent experience in a relevant subject (social sciences, geography, environmental psychology)
- PhD, or equivalent experience, in a relevant scientific research subject (social sciences, geography, environmental psychology)
- Current driving licence and passport.

2. Experience

Essential:

- Post-doctoral or equivalent experience of study conception and design, supervision of data, collection, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and scientific reporting in relevant subject(s).
- Current experience and knowledge of conservation issues.
- Current knowledge of relevant fields (social and health and wellbeing benefits of blue or green space, climate resilience of communities).
- Record of publishing in international scientific journals.
- Extensive experience in data gathering /data management methods.
- Experience with working on projects within the UK and with a range of communities.

Desirable:

- Experience of project design using logical frameworks or similar methods.
- Knowledge of wetland conservation.
- Knowledge of ecosystem services evaluation.

3. Managerial & Supervisory

Essential:

- Ability to manage scientific staff, research students and volunteers, including those that are out-posted.

Type of team member	Number managed (No. of direct reports)	Number supervised
Employed staff	0-2	0

Volunteers	0-4	0-20+ (e.g. citizen scientists)
Casual Workers	0-4	0

4. Responsibility

Essential:

- Ability to lead significant WWT work areas that have national impact and profile.
- Ability to manage and implement national conservation projects effectively, including budget management.
- Ability to manage a large project budget and substantial assets efficiently ensuring compliance with all WWT policies and procedures.

Levels of Responsibility:

Type of Responsibility	Level (£'s)
Budget Responsibility	Up to £1,000
Income	N/A
Project Size (normally managed)	Small/medium
Assets (required for job, exc. buildings)	Up to £10,000
Visitors (number per annum)	N/A

5. Creative Ability

Essential:

- Able to negotiate with, persuade and influence a wide range of stakeholders, both internally and externally, nationally.
- A creative and strategic thinker, able to devise and develop WWT work areas and contribute to the development of WWT strategy.
- An excellent problem-solver, able to resolve significant issues and challenges that arise in WWT projects.
- An ability and resilience to work under pressure and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances, including when representing WWT externally.
- Intellectually able and curious, with an ability to stay abreast of cutting-edge developments in relevant field.
- Some degree of autonomy over work areas, including as they relate to external influence and impact.
- High degree of autonomy over day-to-day work programme.

6. Contact

Essential:

- Ability to collaborate with and influence personnel from external stakeholders, demonstrating advocacy and communication skills to ensure WWT objectives are met.
 - Ability to maintain a network of external contacts with statutory agencies, academia and/or NGO's.
 - Ability to work closely with Managers and Sponsors of WWT's conservation projects, ensuring effective delivery.
 - Excellent communication and media skills – verbally, visually and in writing.
 - Ability to represent WWT.
-

General Notes

This position *may* from time to time require work during some evenings, weekends and public holidays to meet the needs of the post.